

# Another Conservation Success Story...

## Upson County, Georgia

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### EQIP Helps Upson County Cattle Farm

By Karen Buckley Washington, Lawrenceville

Tom Rogers developed a love for farming from his grandfather, whom he lived with during his childhood, and developed a desire to operate a farm of his own from that experience.

Rogers and his wife, Dorothy, purchased their 15-acre farm in Thomaston in 1997 where they raise a herd of Belted Galloway cattle and grow blueberries. For most of his adult life, Tom had raised broiler chickens for a local

**“The NRCS personnel have been wonderful to work with,” —Tom Rogers.**

farm, along with cattle, so the transition into operating his own farm wasn't foreign to him.

“Our original intention, with our farm, was to breed and raise Peruvian horses, but our focus changed to raising cattle, something I knew very well,” said Rogers.

Rogers became concerned about erosion around the cattle's water troughs and hay rings, which resulted in having to move the cattle periodically, due to excessive standing water and mud.

“For years, we only had water from our household well, which caused us concern about providing a sufficient water supply,” said Rogers. “We also needed adequate winter grazing and additional cross fencing to better manage our resources.”

While visiting Auburn University's veterinary facility, Rogers discussed some of



Tom and Dorothy at one of the Mirafount watering troughs.

his concerns with vet technicians on staff and they suggested that he contact the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for information.

Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), along with the 319 Potato Creek watershed project, Barnesville District Conservationist Carmen Westerfield and Soil Conservationist Technician Carol Oliver offered technical assistance to Rogers with the installation of a rotational grazing system, using geotextile fabric and stone gravel (crush and run), to manage problems with standing water and overgrazed pastures.

“Their rotational grazing system has allowed the grass to be in better condition and

plentiful, even in drought conditions,” said Oliver. “They are thrilled with the watering facilities and with the heavy-use areas around the troughs. The cows no longer stand in mud and they have plenty of water.”

With their grazing concerns now resolved, the Rogers' continue to sell blueberries to the public, through local farmers markets and plan to expand to a 'Pick Your Own' site next year.

“With the help of the programs, our operation has been enhanced, is much more manageable and eco-friendly. The NRCS personnel have been wonderful to work with,” said Rogers.



Cross fencing with watering facilities and hay ring area with heavy use pad.



Blueberry orchard

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